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'THE WHOLE THING WAS A LIE' IS THE TITLE

Green Beret Tells a Story

By TOM HARNEY

A former Green Beret sergeant, decorated for heroism in Viet Nam, spoke out strongly here yesterday against the American intervention in the war.

Donald Duncan, 35, explained at a press conference at the Mayflower Hotel how he became disillusioned while serving in Viet Nam and left the Army last September after 10 years service, six of them in the Special Forces.

During his 18 months in Viet Nam, he said, little by little he became aware that the vast majority of the Vietnamese people, communist or not, sympathize with the Viet Cong.

Now a military affairs editor of the liberal Catholic monthly magazine, "Ramparts," Mr. Duncan has written an article about his experiences entitled, "The Whole Thing Was a Lie."

DOUBLE NEGATIVE

He writes that he turned down the offer of a commission as a captain and quit altogether after he discovered that it was not democracy the United States was bringing to Viet Nam, but anti-communism.

"Anti-communism is a lousy substitute for democracy," Mr. Duncan wrote in the article.

"I'm not particularly happy about Viet Nam going under Ho's communism. In the long run I don't think the country will be better off. But it's not for me or my government to decide. That decision is for the Vietnamese."

The Pentagon said yesterday it had no comment on Mr. Duncan's views. It did confirm that he had received an honorable discharge and hadn't been disciplined while in uniform.

ALONE, APPARENTLY

Mr. Duncan said he knows no members of the Special Forces who share his views in public.

"It's not surprising, with courts martials giving three years, five years, and 10 years to protesters," he said.

He said he is a native of Toronto, Canada, but was naturalized an American in 1955. His mother was a prominent electronics engineer and his stepfather, Henry Gerber, is the retired director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Gerber is a Hungarian and Mr. Duncan said his hatred of the Communist suppression of the Hungarian uprising along with his Roman Catholic religion made him a militant anti-Communist when he was drafted into the Army in 1956.

GUNG HO!

The Special Forces, whose men wear green berets and whose mission is to organize counter insurgency guerilla operations in foreign countries, appealed to him because of their clan and dedication.

"I want to emphasize that I'm not trying to put down the Special Forces," Mr. Duncan said. "The idea behind it is an excellent one and I have

a high regard for many of the officers and men in the Special Forces."

However, he charged, Special Forces troops are taught torture methods used by the Soviet Secret police (NKVD).

"When we asked if we were supposed to use the methods, we were told, 'I can't tell you that. The mothers of America wouldn't approve.'"

A DEATH DODGE

Emphasis was also placed on the fact that guerillas can't take prisoners and he said Special Forces trainees were continuously told, "you don't have to kill them yourself — turn them over to the Vietnamese Army to do that."

In his article, Mr. Duncan described the Special Forces as being largely made up of refugees from the Iron Curtain countries, mostly anti-communists bordering on the fanatical.

Others, he said, are young men looking for glamour, promotions, or extra money. In Viet Nam these "self-styled John Waynes" see their job as killing Viet Cong and complain bitterly when assigned to more constructive tasks, as distributing food.

When he first went to Viet Nam in 1964, he said, Special Forces men masqueraded as civilians to train armed groups for the Central Intelligence Agency, so as to avoid openly violating the Geneva agreement.

CAMPAIGN GIMMICK

Also, he said, Vietnamese soldiers he helped train were sent into Laos on a secret mission without the Special Forces officers who trained them because "it was an election year and it would cause President Johnson great embarrassment if Americans were captured in Laos."

Mr. Duncan said that the primary purpose of the mission called "Project Delta," was to find the Ho Chi Minh trail and gather information on the traffic of troops and weapons.

Only six out of 40 men came back from the mission, he said, but the evidence confirmed that there was no significant infiltration from the North.

"One more thing was added to my growing lists of 'official' stories," he said.

Another outfit, called the Special Operations Group (SOG)

Defense Denies

Sergeant's Charge

The Defense Department today denied categorically charges by a former Special Forces sergeant that the "vast majority" of the South Vietnamese people support the communists.

It also denied the sergeant's assertions that the Special Forces, elite counter-insurgency specialists known by their green berets, have been trained to torture prisoners.

"Thousands of South Vietnamese have fled from Viet Cong terror to seek protection," it said. "This number is constantly increasing. No leader of South Viet Nam, past or present, civilian or military, of any religion or sect, has defected to the Viet Cong." (UPI)

trained groups of men to go into North Viet Nam to do the same thing the Viet Cong were doing in the South, he said.

SOG was a combined operation with the CIA, Air Force, Navy and Special Forces all involved, he said, but of the groups sent in only one was ever heard from again.

Mr. Duncan denied that any of this information constituted a breach of security.

"This is all common knowledge in Viet Nam and to the foreign press and I think it is time the American people were told about it."

If free elections were held, he said, the Vietnamese people would chose Ho over Ky. Without American support, Ky's regime wouldn't last two weeks, Mr. Duncan said.